I'll Always Wait For You

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I'll Always Wait For You

by hannibalatemyass

Summary

Hannibal haunts the home he once shared with Will, and holds out as long as he can. Once he has no choice but to move on, he can only think of Will.

Cleansing Rain

He had always lived alone in the house on the mountainside where few souls dared to go. What few people tried to move in found themselves scared out within days, and the property went back up for sale. Eventually some hunters bought the haunted land, and they quickly learned the house was off limits. As long as no one entered the house, their bounty from the land would be plentiful.

After a handful of decades, the hunters quit coming in the flesh. Now their spirits occasionally roamed, and Hannibal welcomed them as guests from time to time. Sometimes they even helped scare would be fixer-uppers from Hannibal's home. They now understood why Hannibal defended his home so resolutely since they could now see what he lived in.

The home was exquisite and modern, though it held many gothic inspired decorating touches. Wooden floors were like new, windows still held brilliantly cleaned glass, and the kitchen would make any chef green with envy. Hannibal's home existed because the house had not been touched. There was no guarantee he would keep his home if someone brought the home back from its disrepair.

Though the hunters often felt bad for Hannibal. Given how he was attached to his house, Hannibal was also aware that one day the house was cease to be. The forest would reclaim the manmade structure, and he would have no house to tend when the roof fully caved in. But his love was immense, and he was happy to spend any amount of time he could within the four walls his love once roamed. He would spend an eternity here waiting for him to come home again if the house would let him.

Will, Hannibal's love, had chosen to reincarnate when he felt his soul growing weak to the call. All souls eventually became unable to resist the call to move on or reincarnate. Some, like Hannibal, held onto their sense of self much more strongly. Will, however, had always struggled with his sense of self. Some days he felt more like someone else than himself, and his empathy made the issue much more dire.

But Hannibal still lived in the world they had together. The world where Will would go fishing and bring home his catch. The world where Hannibal would cook them elaborate dinners and pour wine into fancy crystal glasses. The world where their mortal flesh could touch and share warmth. The world where illness hadn't touched the brilliant mind behind blue eyes that Hannibal cherished so much. The world where he hadn't watched Will slowly fade with each passing day. The world where Will's soul was still vibrant. The world that was so short in its existence, yet profound in its impact. The world that Hannibal chose to live in while he waited for his beloved to return to him once more.

One day the hunters also came to visit to let Hannibal know they were going to give in to the call to move on to the next stage. While he didn't show it, Hannibal was saddened to know they wouldn't be able to meet again on this plane. He sent them off with a grand meal and well wishes, genuinely hoping whatever they found satisfied them. When they walked off his

front porch, instead of walking down the path they always came... they turned and waved before slowly vanishing from sight.

For the first time in a long time, Hannibal was alone once more. His existence was beginning to become hollow. Every passing year, he felt more of the tug to move on. It took his hand becoming see through for him to realize he was beginning to forget why he wanted to stay. What was the chances that Will would reincarnate and still remember? What were the odds that if Will did remember that he would find this place? After all the killing and the death that Hannibal caused, he was almost assured that fate wouldn't be kind to him.

Heart no longer in it, the house he saw began to mirror the one in the living world. He began to struggle to maintain the image of what once had been to live in. Hee stepped carefully around large holes in weathered floors to avoid falling down to the basement from the second floor. Until one day he lost the will to pretend he was alive and had to worry about sure footing to move.

That was the day his feet began to vanish from his sight. The ether calling for Hannibal to make a choice or cease to exist. He found himself tempted by the idea of ceasing to exist. Never again would he have to hold onto any emotional whim of wanting to see the face of a lover that had surely forgotten him at this point. Perhaps Will had already moved on. Will... what did he even look like?

A scream broke the silence of the woods before the roof finally snapped down into the house, and it was Hannibal’s fault. Losing himself in a moment of spiritual pain, his anger lashed out at the dilapidated house he loved so dearly. He struggled to remember why he loved it so much. Struggled and failed to remember what Will looked like. Was Will his beloved's name?

It began to downpour as Hannibal sobbed, partially through the roof that broke through the second floor and crashed down onto the first. He'd heard stories when Will was with him, though he couldn't fully remember them. Instinctively he knew the rains were cleansing and he had to make a choice. When it quit raining, he wouldn't be in the house he both adored and ultimately destroyed. He would either be nowhere ever again or somewhere entirely new.

Turning his head to the sky like he had done so many centuries ago, Hannibal cried as the rain fell down his face. His body was slowly vanishing from his knees up, and he let himself grieve his own inevitability. In his last moments, fate cruelly gave him clarity. Will’s form appeared in his mind perfectly. His curly black hair, his scruffy facial hair, and his full lips. He was smiling in this visage, as if welcoming Hannibal to whatever fate he chose.

Eyes still closed, Hannibal let himself evaporate with the rain. His heart forever holding onto the memory of Will and searching for his touch.

Mocking Rain

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Screaming filled Will's ears as rain suddenly poured down from the heavens. He had finally managed to purchase the property that was in a parcel that spanned the entire mountain side. He kept having dreams about a home that was going to fall in with a man inside of it. The man felt so strangely familiar, and Will knew he had to see him to confirm what he dreamed was real.

The screaming made him run, leaping over fallen tree trunk the best he could manage. When he finally did make the clearing it was to the sound of aged beams snapping and cracking until they fell with a rush of wind that blew Will's hair back. In fact the wind in general had picked up so heavily that Will struggled to make it to the fallen in house where he could just make out a man's torso.

Still. The air suddenly went very still. Will looked up at the man who was slowly fading with his head turned to the sky, tears falling from his face. The rain now only fell on the house and the man. Will knew who this man was now. Hannibal.

Hannibal Lecter the man who destroyed and created with the same brush. The man Will loved with every single fiber of his being. The man he kept reincarnating to try to find. The man he tried to gain more and more of his own self with each life so he could stay with. The man who was disappearing before his very eyes. Now just shoulders and a head.

He had chose the void whether he knew it or not. Will didn't know how he knew, just that he knew he was witnessing the love of all of his lives go into the void. Did fate not torture him enough? Were his kills so absolutely unforgivable by the weaver of fates? Were politicians that sent young men off to die not worse than the man who killed and ate so few in comparison?

Will dropped to his knees in the soggy earth and watched as a serene calm came over Hannibal's face. He looked so peaceful. Will knew what Hannibal was thinking of. Will knew if he spoke, Hannibal's last moments of existence would be of regret. So Will watched silently. He stood guard as the last bit of hair melted away with the damning, mocking rain.

Then he screamed. He screamed until no more sound could come from his throat. He continued to sob and punch the ground below him, cursing the weaver of fate for being so cruel. He tried to continue screaming and fell into a coughing fit, falling to his side and

getting caked in mud and leaves. He would never recover. He didn't want to live anymore. He didn't want to exist.

He had lived so many lives to get to the moment of meeting Hannibal. He had worked so hard to get himself spiritually strong, trying new things every life. His goal was so strong that he didn't need to remember Hannibal in every life to know he needed to be stronger. His love was so strong he didn't need memories to know his heart belonged to someone he could not reach. And now it meant nothing. Hannibal chose to have his soul obliterated than face another moment without Will.

Anger coursed through Will's being, and then a sudden wave of peace. Will didn't have to try anymore. Will could live this life however he wanted. The consequences no longer mattered. If Hannibal didn't exist... then Will didn't want to either. Will wouldn't exist anymore. He would follow Hannibal to the void so that maybe their scattered essences may float across the cosmic void together. Maybe some piece of their disintegrated souls would twirl together forever. Even if their consciousness was gone, it was best to forever be dust swirling and mixing and coming together as one than be separated and aware of it.

Will stood himself up and walked over to the house. He stood in the entry way cut out in the stone foundation and stared down where there was the perfect hole to jump down into the extremely deep basement. One last swan dive and he could be with Hannibal forever. He was certain he could break his neck or at least do enough damage to get the job done. Closing his eyes, Will took this dive from the edge alone. He knew this dive would be the final one before he went to the void. His mind held Hannibal's memory tightly and he didn't even feel the crossing point.

Then he, too, was facing up towards the sky with rain once again pelting his face. He, too, made no choice other than Hannibal. Wherever Hannibal went was where his soul needed to go. It didn't matter if that was the void or not. Much like his lover, Will's last memory was of a smiling Hannibal, welcoming and full of everything Will felt was home. And to the void where nothing would touch him ever again Will went.

Chapter End Notes

I promise the next chapter will have the fluff and be longer.

Fresh Air

Chapter Notes

I'm not good at fluff, but I tried owo

"Mischa," Hannibal groans and rolls over onto his side to stare down at his little sister. He wasn't wearing any form of mask yet, so he still had completely white skin, black eyes, and black antlers. Small hands were smacking his side as Mischa giggled and continued to try to wake him. "Okay, okay... I'm getting up."

Shifting into his literal person suit, Hannibal now looked much like he did as a human when he was younger but with elven ears like his sister's. Despite only being four years older, Hannibal was maturing in the same fast manner as all changelings did in Aspire. He already appeared 22 or 23, and his mind had quickly caught up with his appeared age. Mischa, not taking after their mother, was a forest elf that aged much slower than a human would. Her innate magic granting her a long life and more time to develop and stay innocent. So while Hannibal was 19 and more mature, Mischa was fifteen and finally the size of a human ten year old.

"We're going to the market!" Mischa exclaimed excitedly. "Motina said we could go by ourselves this time!"

Fully awake now, Hannibal grinned down at his little sister. "Really?"

"Yeah! And I'm going to sell all the shell horns I've been making!" Mischa smiles widely and pats her bag. "You should sell some of your preserves and shit!"

"No swearing," Hannibal corrects as he stands, stretching for a moment before moving to get on some actualy clothes. "I'll skip selling the preserves since Motina said the winter was going to be less then kind this year."

"What are you going to sell then?" Mischa asked as she sat at Hannibal desk and started to look through his drawings carefully. "Those fishing lures you got obsessed with recently? The ones that you hope your soul mate will like?"

"Actually," Hannibal snips back despite himself. "I do plan on starting to sell some." He thinks for a moment as he sticks his hand in his bag, checking the contents in the unlimited storage for what all he had. "...some furs too..."

"Motina said you should sell some of your skulls, too," Mischa adds. "She said the mounts are very nice and it's been long enough."

"That is true," Hannibal smiles and nods. Skulls taken from anything had to be held onto for three years so there was no chance of the soul coming back for it during the Winter. Found skulls also had to have the same treatment, and they also had to get checked by the market's seer for where they were collected.

When Hannibal pulled his hand out of the bag, Mischa asked, "Can you braid my hair again?"

Heart happier than he ever remembers being other than with Will, Hannibal nods. "Of course." He takes the amber comb he bought for Mischa off of his desk, gently combing out the strands so he can make the braids nice and tidy. In their life on Earth before she was killed, Hannibal had promised to braid her hair when it grew long again. He had cut her hair when the people who took over their estate used it to drag her to the room they were storing children in. Now they had an almost daily ritual of braiding Mischa's hair, silently appreciating their new, much happier life together.

The new life had made the old memories slowly fade with time, but they were still there. Some nights when the skies were clear and the stars were on full display, they'd stay up late to admire them. Most of those times they'd talk about the old life they both had lived. He was correct in believing Mischa was slightly saddened to hear about how he had lived, but incorrect for the reasoning. She was sad he had lived so utterly alone, manipulating those around him, and killing for such light reasons. Though some of the reasons for killing she did condone, but not all of them.

Some of the time they just sat and held onto each other, nightmares having woken them up from their slumber. Though it's less often now that he's older, when Hannibal was younger he used to run into his parent's room expecting them to be gone. Mischa had horrible night terrors for years, reliving her death over and over. Sometimes they talked at night over how quickly Mischa had chosen the void. She didn't even stick around to get revenge of any sort. As of late, they've mostly been enjoying how long they've been able to stay together this time around.

Once her hair was braided, the pair began to recheck over their wares they plan to sell. Their mother was already checking over their horses, affectionately brushing them and talking to them in hushed tones. Since their father was still out on a hunting trip, his last of the year, she was doing the duties that a father typically does for a first lone trip. It was a moment of pride that their parents agreed upon, and their father planned to meet up with them when they got home. The returning of their first lone journey held the most significance in his culture.

All things considering, everyone has adapted well to Aspire. Their past lives are treated more as useful but mostly disregarded knowledge for the most part. Now that they live on Aspire, all of them accept their current reality as the one that needs the most focus. Though all of them admit struggling hard with it as small children. Thankfully it's common place in Aspire to be born with memories of another realm and time. This realm was called Undergrowth due to it being accepted as fact that you could 'fall' into the realm. As though this realm were the undergrowth of an ancient forest, lush and a seemingly ever expanding expanse of unknowns.

"Mischa," their mother started as she stared into her eyes seriously. "Listen to Hannibal. Don't try to go running off on your own."

"I know, Motina," Mischa nods and smiles as her face is clasped between her mother's hands. Her blond hair the same as when she was human, long and pulled into a working bun. Dark brown eyes crinkled at the edges from a proud smile as she looked into her daughter's dark brown eyes in complete adoration.

"I know you know, but it never hurts to say it again," Motina kisses Mischa's forehead and smiles wider as she pulls away. "I'm so proud of you, always know that. Daddy is proud of you, too, honey."

She stepped back and took on the visage of her husband, fully committing to giving them the proper look for Mischa's first send off. Long sandy brown hair with a touch of grey at his temples was pulled back into a thick braid with feathers and rites of passage from his people woven into it. But the clothes were still Motina's, a simple black cloak with a hood.

Now Motina pull a small pouch with ash from the Everburn, she began to use their father's voice to recite the first travel rites in his native tongue over Mischa. Once Mischa's eyes were closed, a three inch black line was drawn across her entire face over her eyes. Unlike regular ash, it was almost loosely sticky like a watered down tar. It glided across Mischa's pale but lightly tanned skin easily, and it didn't feel oily or heavy. It was a weird substance that Hannibal remembers receiving fondly.

Hannibal received it next, but he also got a black bottom lip with a wide line down his chin and neck. Root like lines extending off of the line on his neck were also added. One for each parent, one for each aunt and uncle, and one for each grandparent. Hannibal’s roots were very plentiful and covered his neck in vein like patterns. If he had neices or nephews, there would be a specific branch with leaves for Mischa and her children rather than the thick line down his chin. For now, the thick line not only symbolized himself, but Mischa as well. If Hannibal had more siblings, branches of a tree would get painted in for each sibling. In some families, the branches extended onto the cheeks or very small brushes made an intricate tree beneath the lips with no thick solid line going down from the bottom lip.

While Mischa's rites spoke of broadening horizons and expanding her world view, Hannibal’s spoke of leading. It was also his first lone trip where he was in charge of others. Tradition spoke that Hannibal could not lead a expeditiob until he led one sibling on an expedition. After this expedition of sorts, Hannibal would be allowed to lead anyone. This was one thing his father kept in tradition with.

The Everburn Ash was also very long-lasting. It wasn't uncommon during times of war for warriors to leave for a decade and come back with the ash still on. It was sacrilegious to wash the skin of the ash until you returned home, and it was to be worn on any trip that would requiring sleeping away from the home. Some forest elves, like their father, wore it every time they left home just in case. Though their father was much more relaxed on how his children chose to wear the Everburn Ash.

"Now Mischa," Motina smiled and returned to her changeling form rather than the earth with elf ears one. Now she was only a little shorter than Hannibal in his changeling form. She was also gaunt with completely white skin and black eyes. Her fingers fading into white half way up her forearm was black just like Hannibal’s as well. Solid black elk like antlers raised up from her head, and they were stunning.

Seeing his mother's form change, Hannibal did the same. His antlers were filling out, but he only had several points. Motina had a full set of antlers that were something any hunter would call a dream rack to have on their wall.

"I'll offer you the highest blessing from our people." Motina put the Everburn Ash back in her pocket and pulled out another pouch. "This is moondust powder mixed with blood from the First One. Since you cannot consume some of his blood and gain the antlers like Hannibal, the First One gave me this to put on your finger tips.

"Give me your hands," Motina instructed as she opened the pouch and had Mischa put her fingers in one by one. "This is to mark that you've matured enough to leave home without me or Papa. The red will soak in naturally, then you'll be able to cast an illusion at will that lasts until you dismiss it of antlers that match your age. Give it a few hours, then you'll be able."

"Thank you, Motina," Mischa smiled, honestly touched that the First One had prepared such a gift. He rarely gave out gifts such as these, so even Hannibal was stunned. The First One recognized Mischa as one of his own irregardless of the fact that she was born as a forest elf. Changelings had a ten percent chance of giving birth to a changeling instead of the humanoid race they mated with.

Changelings were infertile in their natural form, but they could gain fertility when they changed forms. It didn't matter if they held form as a man or woman, either way would be fertile. Most changelings had a gender they preferred to hold to, but some had no preference and were okay being either side of the coin for bearing children. Though both partners being changelings in any form did not make children. The First One called it the price of being able to be fluid in form.

"Thank the First One," Motina smiles and cups Mischa's face in her hands again. "He has smiled down upon this beautiful daughter of mine the same as he smiles upon my son. Praise the First One for giving us his grace as followers of his kin."

"Praise the First One," Mischa and Hannibal echoed, genuine feeling behind their words.

Helping Mischa onto her horse despite her not needing help, Motina thought back to when they were small both in this life and the first. "My children have grown into such beautiful teenagers. I'm so happy to be here to watch over you both this time around."

Much like Mischa, their mother had chosen the void immediately. Since she did not know what all happened to Mischa and Hannibal, they never told her. Their father had stayed around and they'd talked many nights over it. The conclusion they all came to was that it was best to lie about it. Mischa just held to the lie that she didn't want to talk about her first life beyond vague terms because this life was so nice. So the tears in Mischa's eyes were both from love and guilt.

"Me, too, Motina," Mischa smiled and her voice cracked slightly when she spoke. "I love every moment we get to spend together this time, too. I love you so much."

"Our time together was so short," Hannibal added in, "I'm extremely delighted to be able to spend every moment we can together. Both in this life and the first, you've always been as

important as Mischa to me. You're all one could ask for when speaking of a mother and a person."

Everyone now wearing misty eyes, the three held hands and closed their eyes. Focusing on the energy and warmth they could feel passing from palm to palm, innate magic and love intermixed with strong emotions no one bothered naming for the time being. When they parted, Motina went back to her preferred form with the elf ears.

"Leave now and be well, my beloved children," Motina smiled at them. "Before I decide you two can't leave my sight."

"I love you, Motina," Hannibal smiled back at her before beginning to head out.

"Be safe, Motina, I love you," Mischa wiped a few tears then waved as her horse followed Hannibal's whistling command to move. The pair was watched by a loving mother's eye until they became small specks down the long dirt road that disappeared into the trees.

"This is a lot of fucking skulls," Will mused as a cart was pulled in by a few of his constructs. As the Seer of the West Spring Market, Will's policy was to have all skulls in possession of a seller had to be checked over by him personally. It didn't take him long with his sight, and it was mostly the reason why Leon made him the Seer. Apparently his gift was extremely rare.

A skeletal construct moved to stand next to Will, awaiting orders. Patting the skeletons cracked skull, Will smiled. "Go relax. Do what you want to for now, Skelly."

Skelly was one of the few constructs that were in Will's possession that held onto his full intelligence. He could write, play piano, complete complex math, cook elaborate meals, and so much more. Honestly, Will wondered what house he once served for, given Skelly's claims he was once the sole servant of a powerful lord. Will really wanted to figure out how to make Skelly able to speak, since Skelly said his real name wouldn't be given until then. Nor would he wear clothes until then, preferring to live as a regular construct for the most part than play life again.

When Skelly went near the fireplace and sat down, feet near the fire, Will began to work. Skulls were moved magically through the air so Will could use his gifted spiritual vision to see if any souls remained. To do so, he had to drop the facade of a human. Black elk horns now sat atop his head, and his skin turned grey. When he exhaled, smoke released from his lung. His eyes were black but would act like embers being blown on every time he breathed, which was only several times a minute. His hands were truly more claw like, with the tips being black and nails long and thick. Teeth like daggers lined his mouth now, but his frame stayed the same as it was before.

As he yawned, light was shown from his throat as though a furnace was coming to life. Releasing the facade always made him a little tired. His mind associated dropping it with going to bed, so it always took a little bit to shake off the sluggish feeling. On his exhale, a few embers flicked out of his mouth and nose, quickly turning to ash in the cool, autumn air that circulate from an open window.

Skulls floated from the cart and Will looked each in the empty sockets. As reported, the skulls on top were old and only held bits of soul that high level magic could tap into. On the bottom was newer skulls that still held souls that low magic could touch. The magic quill on the desk was quickly writing out certificates of authentication for each skull before placing each sellable skull in its own magical box.

The magical boxes would disperse when the item was purchased. Until then the skulls would stay in a box with the certificate attached. It was an easy way to prevent theft, as the boxes would float back to the stall if someone tried to run off with them as well. The newer skulls were placed in boxes as well, but these ones had "Not For Sale" in red on every side with the time until it could be sold underneath. This allowed people to see upcoming items without the issue of anyone trying to sell them. The boxes would float to the Seer Tower rather than the stall, and a small investigation would see whether it was an illegal sale attempt or theft.

When he was completed and the skulls were back on the cart in their boxes, Will waved over the constructs that pulled the cart in. "Go get the man that loaded this cart."

The stack of certificates was large, and Will wasted no time in getting to work. Each certificate required his signature and the signature of the seller. They had to be done by hand so that magic could show them physically signing, otherwise the sale could be considered illegal. When they were sold, the seller had to put the price sold for and another signature. The buyer then signed the certificate as well.

"I'm here about the skulls I wish to sell," Hannibal called out as the constructs stepped aside to let him into the tower.

"Come here and start signing," Will waved him over without looking, fully engrossed in his task. "Thank you for coming a few days before you want to sell. I'll inspect your pelts and things next. Do you have all your tags?"

"I do," Hannibal nods and walks over to the desk, sitting down and starting to sign the certificates where Will pointed. It took him only a moment to recognize the name, looking at Will with a smile. "Will Graham. What are the odds you'd have the same name in this world."

Finally Will looked up, awe immediately hit his face as Hannibal looked back in his changeling form. "Hannibal?"

"I do believe it's fate that we meet again," Hannibal smiles and sets down his quill. "How have you been-"

He's cut off when Will pulls him into a hug, needing to affirm Hannibal is actually here. Needing to feel his pulse against his skin, his warmth against his own. It had been so fucking long, and Will didn't bother to hold back the tears as he held onto Hannibal tightly. Hannibal wasn't without tears either as he held onto Will tightly and huffed the scent he missed so much, surprised that Will still held so many of the notes he did on Earth.

When Will took longer than usual on his appointment, Leon came to check in on him. He didn't need to look long to understand what was happening, there was only one person Will had ever told him he'd stop work in the middle of the day for. If the Lord of Death had lips,

he'd be smiling. Instead, the part of his face that did have flesh, cheekbones up minus his nose, softened as though smiling. He stepped back out of the doorway he was going to come in through and took over as Seer for the rest of the day.

"My boss gave me the rest of the week off since I have a five years of vacation built up," Will smiles and laces his fingers in Hannibal's. Hannibal was back in his young adult form with elf ears so as not to attract too much attention, and Will was in his human form.

"Five years?" Hannibal laughs, "How old are you?"

"Nineteen," Will answers with a small laugh. "Demons like me are adults at four, and I've been working this job for fifteen years. Wanted to save up vacation time for when I finally found you. How old are you?"

"Ninteen, but just considered an adult last year," Hannibal smiles widely. "My family came back together, and we have a small homestead. Motina is a changeling like me, Mischa and Father are forest elves."

Squeezing Hannibal's hand, Will smiles widely again, "The teacup came back together again."

"It has," Hannibal's smile has a softness to it as he looks around the tent he has set up. It's a magical one where the inside is far larger than what it appears outside, and several people are milling about inspecting wares. "What of your family?"

"I have a new one," Will admits with a very soft smile. "I'm the eldest now, which is different. Took a lot of... adjusting. At first. I have nine younger siblings."

"A loud household I presume," Hannibal comments with a subtle smirk hinting at his amusement.

"Very," Will nods then sighs. "My youngest brother is the only one that's not a twin other than me. Though we're all doing our thing at the moment, and I'm the only one magically inclined. Parents say the eldest usually is the only one with magic, but my brothers are still salty about it."

"Preseasoned rude?" Hannibal jokes and utterly soaks in the smile it earns him from Will.

"You could definitely say that," Will laughs and shakes his head. "Do you still have your old tastes?"

"I'd be lying if I said outlaws didn't go on the table," Hannibal answers as he takes tabs on the people milling about again. "Fortunately, those considered outlaws are truly free range rude here."

"No worries of being apprehended then?" Will asks as he squeezes Hannibal's hand now.

"None," Hannibal squeezes Will's hand back. "You worry too much."

"Forgive me for being worried of your past," Will raises an eyebrow at Hannibal, letting go of his hand when a man approaches with several wares in hand.

Handling the transaction smoothly, Hannibal managed to sell several skulls, pelts, and fishing lures. Will had already browsed Hannibal's selection and accepted the gifts that were made for him in particular. The ones left for sale were ones Hannibal had made many copies of, and they were honestly a huge hit. Even the skulls were practically selling themselves, but it wasn't hard when Hannibal had such a fine selection to choose from.

Will continued to keep Hannibal and Mischa company, but he mostly hung out in Hannibal's stall during open hours. They filled each other in on their new lives. What they did, who they knew, new hobbies, new tricks, and whatever else they could think of. As they talked, their connection grew stronger once more. It was beyond reassuring to both of them, and they found solace in being with one another again.

The last day of Will's week off was also the last day Hannibal would be in the city.

"Can I come with you?" Will asks, holding Hannibal's hand again and looking up at him through thick eyelashes.

"Motina has been waiting years to meet you," Hannibal kisses Will chastely since Mischa is present. "I'm sure she'll be happy for the added company."

"Father will be delighted as well," Mischa smiles as she gets on her horse.

"Are all your things in order?" Hannibal asks and eyes the leather messenger bag on Will's hip.

"I'll come with you to your family's homestead and teleport back and forth as needed," Will answers with a smile. "Skelly will be taking care of my tower in the mean time."

"Our parents had a teleportation circle put in a while back," Mischa chirps as she pets the mare's mane lovingly. "If it wasn't my first lone trip, we would've used it."

Pulling chalk out and beginning to draw a large circle on the ground, Will smiles up at Mischa. "I find traveling by horse to be worth the trip. There's a lot of ingredients and things you would never find otherwise."

"It really is something," Hannibal smiles and looks to the forest beyond the gates.

The circle Will drew begins to glow purple before becoming a black void that a skeletal steed pulls itself out of slowly. It's bones were charred looking, and it exhaled a fog like puff once it saw Will. "Meet Ni, my close friend of many years." Will puts his forehead against Ni's before climbing up onto her saddle.

Taking Will's hand once he's fully on his horse, Hannibal kisses Will's knuckles lovingly. "To our new beginning, my beloved."

Smiling back warmly, Will pulls Hannibal in for a soft kiss. "To the beginning of our new forever."

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